

Honorable Vic Snyder  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Military Personnel  
Armed Services Committee  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

May 12, 2005

Dear Congressman Snyder,

I was very dismayed by the personnel subcommittee passage of an amendment to Chapter 349, title 10, USC, which would prohibit the assignment of female members of the Army to Forward Support Companies and ask that you work to defeat its passage in full committee. The inclusion of such language in the Defense Authorization Bill is untimely and ill advised.

I oppose this amendment for a variety of reasons:

- (1) This legislation is a slap in the face to America's women soldiers who have been such an integral part of support in OIF. They have performed with competence and courage on an asymmetrical battlefield that clearly has no front lines, where any American faces the threat of combat anywhere in the theater. Our Army could not do its job in Iraq without women and Army women in Iraq have clearly demonstrated they can do anything this Nation asks them to. It is not clear why some in Congress would ask women to do less than they are capable of doing, especially when their performance in combat has suggested that many of the remaining restrictions on women should be lifted.
- (2) At a time when Army recruiting is struggling to make quota, it seems ill advised to send a message to the American people that there is no longer equity for women in roles that have traditionally been open to them. This may further reduce the pool of the volunteers for military service.
- (3) To preclude the assignment of women to forward support companies will reduce the available "manpower" and most importantly the pool of *quality* manpower in these critical assignments while we are at war. This will undoubtedly affect the readiness of the force fighting in Iraq and in future conflicts.
- (4) Prohibiting the assignment of women to these combat support and combat service support units places a much larger burden for sacrifice on men, something women in the Army do not want and something that builds resentment among men and reduces force cohesion. Women soldiers share equally in America's peace, freedom and democracy and have volunteered to share equally to protect and defend our way of life.

- (5) With such a high percentage of women in the support MOS, to preclude assignment of women to forward support companies would put a disproportionate number of women in other support units, create gender imbalance in these units and deny men the opportunity to serve equally in other units as well.
- (6) This amendment closes critical professional and career development opportunity to women. This lack of experience would render them less competitive for future promotion and career enhancing assignments.
- (7) Army leadership opposes this amendment.

This is a bad amendment for women who serve in our Army, for their male counterparts and for the readiness of our force. Please let me know if I can do anything else to strengthen the effort to defeat this amendment in full committee. I can be reached at (703) 577-1891 or at: [kathyfrost@comcast.net](mailto:kathyfrost@comcast.net).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn G. Frost". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathryn" being more prominent than the last name "Frost".

Kathryn G. Frost  
Major General  
US Army, Retired

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